



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Georgia's Pre-K Program Will Serve More Children in the Face of Class Reductions**

**ATLANTA, Ga., (April 21, 2011)** – Two thousand additional children will be able to participate in Georgia's Pre-K Program during the 2011-2012 school year despite administrative changes resulting from recent budget reductions. The program will serve 86,000 four year olds in the coming school year. With the reductions, the number of children in each class will increase from 20 to 22 resulting in the elimination of approximately 300 Pre-K classrooms. Another significant change includes reducing the Pre-K calendar by 10 percent – from 180 to 160 days.

"We are pleased to be able to serve two thousand more children than the previous year, thereby substantially reducing our wait list approximately 25 percent over the entire school year," said Bright from the Start Commissioner Bobby Cagle. "Our team is working hard to minimize the impact of the coming changes for Georgia's children and their families, as well as for providers."

Community feedback was also factored into the program's modifications. Bright from the Start conducted focus groups, surveys and webinars statewide to engage numerous stakeholders in the process.

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“We wanted to make sure that as many people as possible were involved,” stated Commissioner Cagle. “Our agency certainly appreciates those who took the time to share their thoughts.” He also emphasized that, “the focus remains on preparing Georgia’s four year olds for successful transition into kindergarten through high-quality learning experiences.”

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning administers the nationally recognized Pre-K Program. Georgia’s Pre-K will continue to be available in all 159 counties.

Be sure to visit Bright from the Start’s webpage that is dedicated to the Pre-K changes at <http://www.dec.state.ga.us/PreK/PreKProposedChanges.aspx>. Call 1-800-4GA-KIDS to locate a Pre-K site near you.

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Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to [www.dec.state.ga.us](http://www.dec.state.ga.us).